



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND FORT CARSON  
6105 WETZEL AVENUE, BUILDING 1435  
FORT CARSON, COLORADO 80913-4289

August 26, 2015

**SUBJECT: Request for Temporary Use of Landing Zones with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to support Upcoming Operational Deployments**

Mr. Keith E. Berger  
Field Manager, Royal Gorge Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
3028 East Main Street  
Canon City, CO 81212

Dear Mr. Berger,

The 4<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade (4CAB) is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel beginning in late 2015. In order to train aviators on the rigors of flying at high altitudes and in mountainous terrain, the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ID) requests temporary usage of High Altitude Landing Zones (HLZs) located on land operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from 1 September to 20 December 2015. This temporary agreement will reduce the risk of fatal accidents during 4CAB's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is one of the most demanding environments aviators operate in. We owe it to our Soldiers and Families to provide the best training opportunities to aviators prior to deploying. A primary way is by replicating the environment our forces will operate in such as HLZs in BLM operated lands. High altitude mountainous environmental training, or HAMET, is crucial in mitigating preventable and fatal aviation accidents by training aviators on unique challenges and aircraft limitations during mountainous flight. I am confident that high altitude training prior to 4CAB's upcoming deployment will reduce the risk that Fort Carson will have to host a memorial ceremony for an accident that could have been avoided with better training opportunities.

I understand that a short-term agreement would be solely for the purpose of training 4CAB's aviators prior to deployment and would have no impacts to a longer-term agreement to utilize HLZs in BLM operated lands. I have charged my staff to work with BLM to implement controls to reduce any impacts to surrounding communities due to aviation operations.

The Army's experiences in the past 14 years of combat highlights the fact that quality training is key to saving lives by mitigating preventable accidents. There is no better place to train aviation units for the unique challenges in Afghanistan than the mountains of Colorado. Accordingly, a temporary agreement authorizing 4CAB aviators

to train on BLM operated HLZs will be critical to reducing the risk of losing a Soldier to a preventable accident in Afghanistan.

The POC is 4<sup>th</sup> ID G3 Air MAJ Dale Hommerding at (719) 503-0501, or [dale.j.hommerding.mil@mail.mil](mailto:dale.j.hommerding.mil@mail.mil).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DAS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas A. Sims  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Chief of Staff